

CLAIMS

We claim:

1 1. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information for a
2 selected user, comprising:
3 receiving from the selected user a list of users with which the selected user will
4 share purchase information;
5 receiving from the selected user an order for a specified item;
6 in response to the receiving the order,
7 processing the order for fulfillment;
8 displaying to the selected user a prompt to choose whether
9 information about the order should be shared with the list of users;
10 if input is received indicating that the user has chosen to share information
11 about the order with the list of users, storing an indication that information about the order
12 should be shared with the list of users;
13 when one of the users views a description for the specified item, if an
14 indication was stored, displaying with the description an indication that the selected user
15 ordered the product; and
16 when one of the users views a page relating to the selected user, displaying on
17 the page an indication that the selected user ordered the product.

1 2. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information for a
2 selected user, comprising:
3 receiving from the selected user a list of users with which the selected user will
4 share purchase information;
5 displaying to the selected user a list of items purchased by the selected user;
6 receiving user input from the selected user selecting a subset of the list of
7 items;

8 storing an indication that users among the list of users should be notified that
9 the selected user has purchased the selected items;

10 when one of the users among the list of users views a description for an item
11 among the selected items, displaying with the description an indication that the selected user
12 purchased the item; and

13 when one of the users views a page relating to the selected user, displaying on
14 the page an indication that the selected user ordered the selected items.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2 receiving user input from the selected user specifying an evaluation of a
3 distinguished item among the selected items;

4 when one of the users among the list of users views a description for the
5 distinguished item, displaying the specified evaluation with the description and an indication
6 that the selected user purchased the item the specified evaluation; and

7 when one of the users views a page relating to the selected user, displaying the
8 specified evaluation on the page with the description and an indication that the selected user
9 purchased the item the specified evaluation; and.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the user input from the selected user
2 specifying an evaluation of the distinguished item specifies a quantitative rating of the item
3 distinguished.

1 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the user input from the selected user
2 specifying an evaluation of the distinguished item specifies a pictorial rating of the
3 distinguished item.

1 6. The method of claim 3 wherein the user input from the selected user
2 specifying an evaluation of the distinguished item specifies a textual discussion of the
3 distinguished item.

1 7. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information for a
2 selected user, comprising:
3 receiving from the selected user an order for a specified item;
4 in response to the receiving the order,
5 processing the order for fulfillment;
6 displaying to the selected user a prompt to choose whether
7 information about the order should be shared with other users; and
8 if input is received indicating that the user has chosen to share information
9 about the order with other users, storing an indication that information about the order should
10 be shared with other users.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 receiving input from the selected user indicating a group of users with which
3 the specified item should be shared,
4 and wherein the stored indication contains an indication of the group of users
5 indicated by the received input.

1 9. The method of claim 7 wherein the stored indication indicates that the
2 specified item should be shared with all users.

1 10. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information for a
2 selected user, comprising:
3 displaying to the selected user a list of items purchased by the selected user;
4 receiving user input from the selected user selecting a subset of the list of
5 items; and
6 storing an indication other users should be notified that the selected user has
7 purchased the selected items.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
2 receiving input from the selected user indicating a group of that should be
3 notified that the selected user has purchased the selected items,

4 and wherein the stored indication contains an indication of the group of users
5 indicated by the received input.

1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the stored indication indicates that all
2 users should be notified that the selected user has purchased the selected items.

1 13. A method in a computing system for displaying to a first user
2 information about a purchase made by a second user, comprising:

3 receiving input from the first user to display a page describing a selected
4 product;

5 determining that the second user has purchased the selected product; and
6 when displaying the page describing the selected product to the first user,
7 displaying within the page a visual indication that the selected product was purchased by the
8 second user.

1 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising, displaying within the page
2 an assessment of the selected product by the second user.

1 15. The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving an instruction
2 from the second user to share information about the second user's purchase of the selected
3 product with the first user.

1 16. The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving an instruction
2 from the second user to share information about the second user's purchases with the first
3 user.

1 17. The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving an instruction
2 from the second user to share information about the second user's purchases with a group of
3 users including the first user.

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1 25. A method in a computing system for notifying a first user about a
2 purchase made by a second user, comprising:
3 detecting that the second user has purchased an item;
4 determining that the first user has a purchase notification relationship with the
5 second user; and
6 providing to the first user a notification that the second user has purchased the
7 item.

1 26. The method of claim 25 wherein a notification that the second user has
2 purchased the item is provided to the first user by displaying a visual indication of the
3 purchase on a Web page requested by the first user.

1 27. The method of claim 25 wherein a notification that the second user has
2 purchased the item is provided to the first user by sending a message to the first user.

1 28. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is an electronic mail
2 message.

1 29. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is an instant message.

1 30. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is a pager message.

1 31. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is a snail mail
2 message.

1 32. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is a voice mail
2 message.

1 33. The method of claim 25, further comprising establishing for the first
2 user a purchase notification relationship with the second user in response to an instruction
3 from the second user.

1 34. The method of claim 25, further comprising establishing for the first
2 user a purchase notification relationship with the second user in response to an instruction
3 from the first user.

1 35. The method of claim 25, further comprising establishing for the first
2 user a purchase notification relationship with the second user in response to a comparison of
3 characteristics of the first and second users.

1 36. The method of claim 25 wherein the notification is only provided in
2 response from authorization from the second user with respect to the item.

1 37. The method of claim 25 wherein the notification includes a control for
2 obtaining additional information about the product.

1 38. The method of claim 25 wherein the notification includes a control for
2 purchasing the product.

1 39. The method of claim 25 wherein the detecting comprises receiving an
2 order from the second user for the item.

1 40. The method of claim 25 wherein the detecting comprises receiving an
2 order from a third user ordering the item as a gift for the second user.

1 41. The method of claim 25 wherein the detecting comprises receiving input
2 from the second user indicating that the second user owns the item.

1 42. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computing system
2 to notify a first user about a purchase made by a second user by:
3 detecting that the second user has purchased an item;
4 determining that the first user has a purchase notification relationship with the
5 second user; and

6 providing to the first user a notification that the second user has purchased the
7 item.

1 43. A computing system for notifying a first user about a purchase made by
2 a second user, comprising:
3 a purchase detection subsystem that detects that the second user has purchased
4 an item;
5 a purchase notification relationship subsystem that determines that the first user
6 has a purchase notification relationship with the second user; and
7 a notification subsystem that provides to the first user a notification that the
8 second user has purchased the item.

1 44. One or more computer memories collectively containing a purchase
2 sharing data structure for a selected user, the data structure comprising information
3 identifying a group of users to be notified of items purchased by the selected user,
4 such that the contents of the data structure may be used to notify the identified group of users
5 of items purchased by the selected user.

1 45. The computer memories of claim 44 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two groups of users, each group of users to be
3 notified of a different set of items purchased by the selected user.

1 46. The computer memories of claim 44 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two groups of users, each group of users to be
3 notified in a different manner of items purchased by the selected user.

1 47. One or more computer memories collectively containing a purchase
2 sharing data structure a selected user, the data structure comprising information identifying a
3 set of items whose purchase by the selected user should be publicized to a group of other
4 users,

5 such that the contents of the data structure may be used to publicize the purchase of
6 identified items to a group of other users.

1 48. The computer memories of claim 47 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two sets of items, each set of items to be
3 publicized to a different group of other users.

1 49. The computer memories of claim 47 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two sets of items, each set of items to be
3 publicized in a different manner.

1 50. A method in a computing system for displaying to a selected user
2 information about items purchased by other users associated with the selected user,
3 comprising:
4 from a set of item purchase indications for items purchased by associated users,
5 identifying items purchased by associated users; and
6 displaying information about each of at least a subset of the identified items.

1 51. The method of claim 50 wherein the displayed information is displayed
2 in an order reflective of the number of associated users that have purchased each identified
3 item.

1 52. The method of claim 50 wherein the displayed includes an indication of
2 the number of associated users that have purchased each identified item.

1 53. The method of claim 50 wherein the displayed includes the number of
2 associated users that have purchased each identified item.

1 54. One or more data signals that collectively convey a data structure, the
2 data structure comprising a list of at least a subset of items purchased by a group of users
3 associated with a selected user,

4 such that the contents of the data structure may be used to identify items purchased users
5 associated with the selected user.

1 55. The data signals of claim 54 wherein the list is ordered in accordance
2 with the number of associated users that have purchased each item.

1 56. The data signals of claim 54 wherein the list includes an indication of
2 the number of associated users that have purchased each item.

1 57. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information using
2 a default sharing flag associated with a selected user that may be either true or false,
3 comprising:

4 detecting that the selected user has acquired an item;
5 in response to so detecting, determining whether the default sharing flag is true;
6 and

7 if it is determined that the default sharing flag is true, automatically providing
8 to users other than the selected user a notification that the selected user has acquired the
9 item.

1 58. The method of claim 57 wherein the default sharing flag applies to all
2 items purchased by the selected user.

1 59. The method of claim 57 wherein the default sharing flag applies
2 exclusively to items purchased for the selected user from a wish list associated with the user.

1 60. The method of claim 57 wherein the condition of the default sharing
2 flag is permanent.

1 61. The method of claim 57, further comprising:
2 receiving input from the selected user specifying a new condition for the
3 default sharing flag; and

4 in response to receiving the input, changing the default sharing flag to the
5 specified new condition.

1 62. One or more computer memories collectively containing a default
2 sharing flag data structure, comprising an indication of whether, when it is detected that a the
3 selected user has acquired an item, a notification that the selected user has acquired the item
4 should be automatically provided to users other than the selected user.

1 63. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the default sharing flag
2 applies to all items purchased by the selected user.

1 64. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the default sharing flag
2 applies exclusively to items purchased for the selected user from a wish list associated with
3 the user.

1 65. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the condition of the default
2 sharing flag is permanent.

1 66. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the condition of the default
2 sharing flag is modifiable in response to input from the selected user.

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